Shatabdi service between Patna and Kolkata

*411. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to link Patna with Kolkata by Shatabdi train, in the wake of heavy traffic on this route;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when such train on the above route would be introduced; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Patna is connected to Kolkata by 14 pairs of Mail/Express trains including 7 pairs of daily trains besides 2305/2306 Delhi-Howrah Rajdhani Express which are considered adequate for present level of traffic between two stations. Introduction of a Shatabdi Express between the two cities is not feasible due to operational and resource constraints including severe line capacity constraints and terminal constraints.

Literacy among Tribals/SCs/STs etc. in Assam

*412. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 293, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 23rd February, 2001 and state:

(a) the details of literacy rate among tribal and hilly people, STs, SCs and women in Assam; and

(b) the details of steps taken by Government to remove illiteracy from the State?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) The literacy rate of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women in the State of Assam was 53.94%, 49.16% and 43.03% respectively, as per 1991 Census. As per the NSSO 53rd Round Survey (1997) the male

literacy rate was 82% while the female literacy rate was 66% in the State. Latest figures on literacy rate among the SCs, STs and Women will be available on the publication of 2001 Census Report.

The Government has taken following steps:—

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

A new Scheme of "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" incorporating all existing Schemes and Programmes in Elementary Education Sector has been launched. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a holistic and convergent approach to implement Universalisation of Elementary Education in a mission mode with a clear district focus. The goals of SSA are as follows:

i) All 6 — 14 age children in schools/EGS centre/bridge course by 2003,

ii) All 6 — 14 age children complete five year primary education by 2007 and

iii) All 6 — 14 age children complete eight years of schooling by 2010.

The approach is community-owned and village education plans prepared in consultation with Panchayati Raj Institutions will form the basis of district elementary education plans. Funds to States would be channelised to registered societies at State level. There will be a focus on districts having low female literacy among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will cover the entire country with a special focus on educational needs of girls, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other children in difficult circumstances.

Efforts would be made to give priority to the 148 districts where the female literacy among SC/ST was less than 10 per cent in 1991. Many of these have been covered under the DPEP or the Lok Jumbish project in Rajasthan. The uncovered districts would be selected first and in the DPEP districts already covered, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will consider proposals for vertical extension of the Project to cover the Upper Primary Section. Proposals for upgradation of primary and upper primary schools in Low Female

Literacy Blocks, provision for teacher recruitment and incentive schemes, would also be considered. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan shall accord the highest priority to community monitoring, transparency in programme planning and implementation capacity building at all levels and adoption of a mission approach by the mainstream Education Department functionaries to achieve UEE in a given time frame. There will be special focus on girl children belonging to SC/ ST communities, urban slums dwellers and low female literacy blocks.

This Ministry have released grants amounting to Rs.22.27 crore to 21 States/UTs for starting preparatory activities in 134 districts. Four districts *viz.* Dhemaji, Karimganj, Nalbari and Tinsukia in Assam have been covered under SSA. A grant of Rs. 74,00,000/- has been sanctioned for starting pre-project activities in these districts.

National Literacy Mission

National Literacy Mission seeks to attain full literacy *i.e.* sustainable threshold level of 75 per-cent literacy by 2005. It seeks to achieve this goal by imparting functional literacy to non-literate in 15-39 age group.

Major thrust of programmes of National Literacy Mission is on promotion of literacy among women, members belonging to SCs and STs particularly in rural areas.

The strategy adopted is imparting basic literacy through Total Literacy Campaigns followed by Post Literacy by consolidation and moving Continuing Education for life-long learning and creation of a learning society.

The funding ratio between the Centre and State Governments for normal districts is 2:1, whereas for districts under Tribal Sub-Plan the ratio is 4:1. Annual plan provision in 2000-2001 was Rs. 120 crore and it has now been stepped up to Rs. 200 crore in budget proposals of 2001-2002.

Steps taken to give greater thrust to remove illiteracy include revision of National Literacy Mission (NLM) parameters and enhancement of financial norms integration of the phases of Total

Literacy and Post Literacy, delegation of powers to State Literacy Mission Authorities, enlarging the scope of Continuing Education, strengthening of Jan Shikshan Sansthans and extending their activities in rural areas, revitalizing State Resource Centres for preparation of better teaching learning materials and improved quality of training.

All the 23 districts in Assam have been covered under Total Literacy Campaign out of them 10 districts are in Post Literacy Programmes.

District Primary Education Programme

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), which aims to achieve universal primary education, is being implemented in nine districts out of 23 districts in Assam through a State Society *viz* Assam Prathamik Siksha Achani Parishad, Guwahati. These nine districts which had female literacy rate less than the national average of 38.3 per cent are predominantly rural in character. DPEP is under implementation in 4 districts—Darrang, Dhubri, Morigoan and Karbi Anglong under Phase I since 1994 and in 5 districts—Barpet, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Kokrajhar and Sonitpur under Phase II since 1996. The total project outlay of DPEP in Assam is Rs. 285.85 crore. The first phase of the programme will expire in March, 2002 and second phase in June, 2003. The grant-in-aid released by the GOI to the above mentioned Society is as under.

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Amount released by GOI		
	Phase I	Phase II	Total
1997-98	18.61	11.76	30.37
1998-99	8.00	15.00	23.00
1999-2000	15.13	29.00	44.13
2000-2001 (Upto February 2001)	11.00	18.00	29.00

Ministries of Social Justice and Empowerment and Tribal Affairs have several schemes on education of SCs/STs. These are:—

(i) Post-Matric Scholarship: The Scheme assists over 20 lakh students annually. The finding pattern of the Scheme is 100% Central assistance.

(ii) Pre-Matric Scholarship to the Children of those Engaged in Unclean Occupation: Central assistance is provided to the State Governments on 50:50 basis and 100% to UT Administrations.

(iii) National Overseas Scholarship for Higher Studies Abroad: The Scheme provides financial assistance to meritorious selected students for pursuing higher studies abroad in specified fields of Masters level courses, PH.D and Post Doctoral research programmes in Engineering, Technology and Science only. So far 732 awards have been offered under the scheme, out of which 532 have been availed of.

(iv) Girls and Boys Hostels: Financial Assistance under the Scheme is provided to the State Governments on 50:50 matching share basis (100% to UTs). Land has to be provided free of cost by the State UT or beneficiary institution.

(v) Book Bank: The Scheme is intended to provide SC/ST students access to the latest text books for Medical, Engineering, MBA, Law etc. Central assistance is provided to the State on 50% basis (100% to UTs).

(vi) Coaching and Allied Scheme: Under the scheme free coaching facilities are provided to SC/ST candidates belonging to families with annual income levels upto Rs. 44,500/- per annum to enable them to compete successfully in competitive examinations conducted by UPSC, SSC etc.

(vii) Upgradation of merits: The scheme aims at upgrading the merit of Scheduled CastesScheduled Tribes student by providing them with facilities for all round development through education in residential schools. The scheme provides for 100% Central assistance. Under this scheme coaching is provided in linguistic skills, science, mathematics.

(viii) Ashram Schools in Tribal Sub Plan Areas: The scheme was launched with objective to extend educational facilities like establishment of residential schools for STs in an environment conductive to learning. The funding is done to the States on 50:50 basis (100% to UTs). The scheme covers primary, secondary and senior secondary level of education.

Besides, the schemes Educational Complexes in low ST female literacy pockets for development of women literacy in Tribal areas; Education Development Programme for SC girls belonging to very low literacy level (less than 2%) and Research and Training are also being implemented for educational development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Direct trains for State Capitals

*413. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether direct trains have connected the capitals of every state;

(b) if not, the details of State capitals connected and not connected with direct trains; and

(c) what are Government's plans for laying rail lines in Rajasthan?